DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 116 CS 215 270

AUTHOR Durnnian, Terry, Ed.; And Others
TITLE Student Expressions Anthology. Junior High.
INSTITUTION Northland School Div. No. 61, Peace River (Alberta).
REPORT NO ISBN-1-55036-344-1
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 72p.; for the accompanying Teacher's Guide, see CS 215 271; for documents in this series covering other grade levels, see CS 215 272-275.
PUB TYPE Creative Works (Literature,Drama,Fine Arts) (030) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Creative Writing; Foreign Countries; Journal Writing; Junior High Schools; *Junior High School Students; Poetry; Short Stories; *Student Developed Materials; *Student Writing Models
IDENTIFIERS Alberta

ABSTRACT

Part of a series of books written and illustrated by the students of Northland School Division, Alberta, Canada, this anthology of junior-high-school student writing honors the spirit and authentic voice of young people. The writing selections in the book are made accessible to educators so that a bridge of understanding can continue to be built between young people and the adults who teach them. The book includes student selections in the form of journal entries, personal essays, poetry, letters, interviews, short stories, picture stories, and art work. Accompanying the student works are stories of teenage memories from an elder and from teachers. (RS)

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Student Expressions Anthology

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STUDENT EXPRESSIONS
ANTHOLOGY

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ISBN 1-55036-344-1

Design, typesetting, and production co-ordination by:
Nortext, P.O. Box 8, Iqaluit, N.W.T. X0A 0H0

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The local school board advises that some selections be read with caution.

JUNIOR HIGH

STUDENT EXPRESSIONS ANTHOLOGY

Northland
SCHOOL DIVISION
No. 61

DEDICATION

Sometimes we give, in words, because we ARE the
receivers, and we know and love the Giver. That is writing.
Both are expressions and sharings of our own being.
We are bonded to the person who listens to our words, but
we free ourselves with the words we write in isolation.

Cora Weber-Pillwax
Deputy Superintendent of Schools

PURPOSE

Student Expressions is an anthology of student writing which honours the spirit and authentic voice of our young people. Throughout this process we have attempted to hear with a focussed heart what our young people want the adults and the peers in their lives to hear. These writings are gifts from our young people. They place before us an opportunity to recognize that the teenage journey has meaning derived from culture and from important personal experiences. The student selections are accompanied by stories of teenage memories from an elder and teachers. This book is the first in a series designed to give our writers a forum to teach us what they would like us to understand.

Candice K. (Fulmes) Amber
Supervisor of Curriculum Development

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Life as a Teenager

What is a teenager? Well, mainly a teenager can be someone who has problems or someone who doesn't have problems. Not all teenagers have problems. Some have good homes. There are a lot of things that can happen to a teenager. For me, I will see things ahead of what will happen.

Being a teenager is not easy. It's not just fun and games. You have to watch out and be careful of what you do. Some teenagers get into drugs, alcohol, pregnancy and some even get involved with the law. Teenagers think that getting high is fun but later they end up regretting it.

Some girls that get pregnant aren't ready to be mothers and it's not easy to be a mother. You have the responsibility of a baby, it's not just a doll. You have to feed it and take care of it at night so there is a lot of responsibility. As for me, I may do these things and I may not. Who knows?

When you have friends, you get a lot of peer pressure and sometimes you need to talk about these things. When my friends need to talk about someone or something, or when I need to talk about something I would go to one person. He told us that if we needed to talk to someone that he would talk to us. So far I haven't talked to him, yet, but if I DID HAVE A PROBLEM I would probably go to him. He's a good friend and a good teacher. Some people don't have anyone to talk to. For us, we are lucky.

When you hang around with the crowd you somehow end up getting involved with drugs and alcohol. Here in Fort MacKay a lot of drinking goes on, especially during the weekend. Some teenagers drink too and a lot of things happen when you drink. You get into fights for no reason.

Alcohol is not a good thing, it causes trouble. So you teenagers out there, think about what you are doing before you start drinking or doing drugs. Just think to yourself, "Will this help me? Will this solve all my problems?" I know how hard it can be because when I look at my friends drinking or doing drugs, I look at them and think, "Are they really having fun or are they just fooling themselves?" I think sometimes of doing these things but I also think, "After I drink, how will I feel?" If I did want to drink, I would go to my friend and tell him about it.

So you see, it's not easy being a teenager. So when you're out there, first think about what you're doing before you do it and be thankful that you don't end up like other people.

Tamara Boucher, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

The Bigfoot Hunt

Once upon a time my best friend and I were hunting for Bigfoot up in the mountains.

We had enough food to last two months. I carried a .44 Magnum and he carried a Colt .45. So now we were ready to see Bigfoot or at least footprints of Bigfoot. It would take at least three days to get to the top of the mountain.

After two days in hard packed snow and in cold weather we finally saw GREAT BIG FROST-COVERED FOOTPRINTS. That day the snow was coming down hard and heavy.

We had to get out of the snow before we got all wet and cold and before we froze. We were still walking up the mountain looking for shelter, but then we saw a cave so we took our toboggan, snowshoes and backpacks inside.

After we took everything in, we lit a fire to dry our clothes and to warm ourselves. And boy, did it ever stink in that cave!

Well, I guess it would, because it was Bigfoot's cave and when we lit a fire all the ice, frost and his fur warmed up. IT STUNK!

We put our clothes on as fast as we could and got out of the cave. But as we got out, Bigfoot was outside the cave. So I took my gun and pointed it at him and so did my friend. I shot and missed. I fell down the mountain and I couldn't stop from rolling down the mountain.

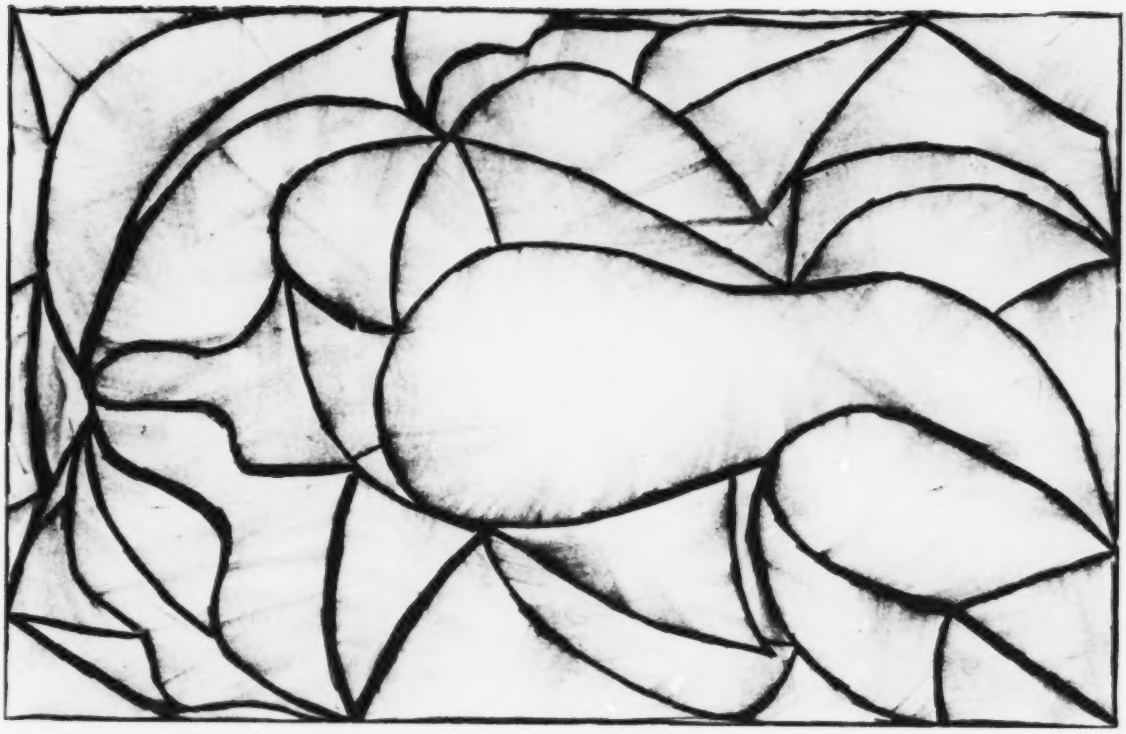
As I was rolling down the mountain I started to form a big snowball, and it was powdery, chilly, cold and wet.

My friend jumped on the sled and down we went. He was going down so fast that he broke the sound barrier. He hit the bottom before I did, but he couldn't stop because he was on ice and it was very slippery.

As for me, I hit a big rock and was free with a dizzy spell. It took five minutes to get over that. When I looked up the mountain, Bigfoot was coming down. So I jumped on my Ski-doo which was left at the bottom of the mountain. I started it up and picked up my friend and home we went.

After tracking, snow-balling, snow-shoeing, tobogganing and cold weather problems, we were frustrated and we decided not to go Bigfoot hunting ever again.

Lorne Tennant, Grade 7
Nose Creek School



The Sky

The sky is great and can be nice,
Where birds fly and land on ice.
The sun rises and goes down,
If it never came up we would frown.
If there were no sky there'd be no air,
With no one to live on and no one to care.
So thank the sky for being there.

Jamie John, Grade 7
Elizabeth School

Life is Not Only Wind

Life is not only wind.
It's everything you can think of.
Life is a world that's not going crazy.
It's full of thoughts and love.
And joy that brings happiness to everyone.
Life brought you and me up.
Life is a journey and a challenge.

Life is not only wind.

Maureen McDonald, Grade 7
Fort MacKay School

Wolves

Black and white wolves stare,
At a bear and a hare,
All lined up by a pine tree,
They shall have with thee
Meat and meat to eat.

Donny Karakuntie, Grade 7
Nose Creek School

The Big Moose

My Nimosom and his brother went to Grassy Lake. On the lake, there was a coat of ice. My Nimosom and his brother were walking along the lake and all of a sudden a big, big, gigantic moose came up from under the water. He said that the moose's head was about the size of a horse and the body was about the size of a house. My Nimosom and his brother ran into the woods. They got lost and some rangers found them, and my Nimosom and his brother told the rangers what they saw. The rangers went and got a chopper and they went to Grassy Lake. They found a big hole in the ice.

Junior Chomiak, Grade 7
Clarence Jaycox School

When I Go Icefishing

When I go icefishing we usually go to Old Fort. It is about an hour's drive by Ski-doo. We have to dress up nice and warm and sometimes we get to sit in the sleigh. When we get there we drill a hole in the ice. Then we get a stick and tie the fishing line around it. Then we wait for a fish to bite. I usually get bored because I sit there and wait and nothing ever happens.

Later on I get the Ski-doo and drive it around where we fish. There is usually a whole bunch of people when we get there and some of my friends too. We can see the houses and cabin from Old Fort Bay.

At lunch time I usually snack on a bag of chips, then try fishing again. Then finally I got a fish. After that we clean it, then we put it in a cooler until it is time to go home.

Just before supper we start to go home. We get all our things together and pack everything in the sleigh to go back home. By the time we get home it is almost dark. We unpack our things and get the fish. After that we have the fish for supper, then we get ready to go back another weekend.

Sherri Flett, Grade 7
Athabasca Delta Community School

Wild Cats in the Timber

As the skies darken and the clouds fill with envy, screams of terror are heard in the timber. As the sound goes echoing across the prairie, little droplets of water start to fall. Yellow needles streak across the sky and go booming across the prairie. Little puddles of water start to form on the ground. Then a yellow needle splits a tree in two, causing a little blaze of fire, which is put out quickly by the water. As the water stops falling and the sky clears, wild cats in the timber are quiet.

Jason Martineau, Grade 8
Paddle Prairie School

Tears Last

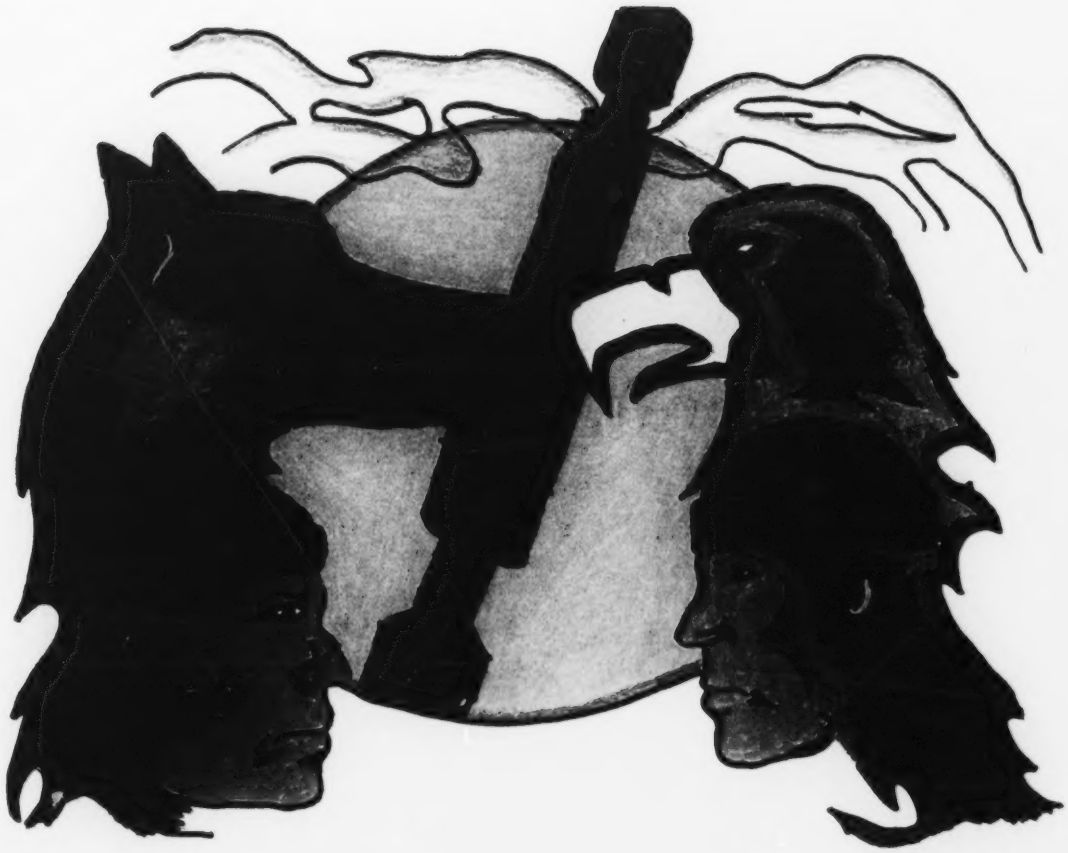
Tears come rushing from my eyes
When I hear you criticize.
It feels as if I've been torn apart,
It just breaks my heart.
When I see you I start to wonder,
Why I cared so much.
It feels as if I'm going under.

Blaine Pelletier, Grade 8
Calling Lake School

Pow-Wow Dancing

The sweat pouring down my face
As I look around
I feel proud to be a dancer
Dancing to the beat
I feel like I'm in paradise
My heart soars.

Dana McDonald, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School



Being Native

Being a young native student is something to be proud and happy about, it's not something to be ashamed of. People that are not native may call us names but we can't let it get us down. They also think we're drunks and poor, but they're wrong. Not all natives are like that.

All natives are talented and smart, if only people would realize it. We're no different from others: the only thing that makes us different is our skin colour. We are all talented in our own ways. There are a lot of natives that are recognized for their art or are learning about their culture by dancing and drumming.

There are Cree, Metis, Chipewyan and other types of natives, but we're alike. We all learn about our cultures the same, but we may have different ideas about our culture. The only thing that is

really different is our language. To me, I don't think anyone's any different no matter how white or how dark they are. We are all still the same because we are all human.

Most of all I like being native because I'm talented in my own way. I hope to learn more about my culture and get recognized one day for my skills.

Lana Marie Huppie, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

What It's Like to Live Up North (for me anyway)

Living in the north is not as bad as people think. We don't just get cold weather up here, we also get very warm weather in the summer and spring. We also get very cold weather in the winter. We have a lot of dirt and gravel roads in Paddle Prairie. That means when snow melts or it rains the roads get very muddy and that's what I can't stand. Another thing is that it seems so far away from bigger places, like the city. In the winter it can be fun, like riding on a Ski-doo or going cross-country skiing or ice skating in the open skating rink. In the summer it's really fun (but hot) to play baseball or to go for a bike ride. Sometimes the place can be very boring and when it gets muddy it looks like a depressing place. Sometimes it's fun and sometimes it's boring. Sometimes it's cold and sometimes it's hot. Living in the north in Paddle Prairie has its pros and cons.

Tonya Jacknife, Grade 8
Paddle Prairie School

Untitled

When I was just four years old I used to watch my grandma make mukluks. I would go and sit beside her and watch her sew away. One Monday morning, when I woke up, I saw my grandma already sewing mukluks and my mom was making me some breakfast. I went outside and I saw my dad packing, so I went up to him and asked him where he's going to go and he said "I'm going hunting."

I asked, "When are you going to be back home?" He said, "Maybe tonight." When it was getting dark I saw my dad coming up the road so I ran inside and yelled "Dad's home!" I ran back out to my dad and saw a dead moose at the back of the wagon. My mom and grandma made the moose meat the next day, so I watched them cutting up the meat. My grandma was making dry meat, my favorite kind. When they were done, my grandma wasn't tired so she got out her sewing kit and started sewing. I watched her and then fell asleep.

Lisa Alook, Grade 7
Kateri School

Untitled

Long ago when I was a little girl my parents always went to the bush. My mom and the girls would stay in the cabin to wait for my brothers and dad to come home and bring moose for us to see. While they were out looking, me and my sisters were down at the lake picking berries when we heard a gun go off. So we ran back to the cabin to tell Mom.

We waited for the men to come home with the moose. Then my sister heard bells and it was my dad with a moose in the wagon. We were very excited that they killed it. My dad and my brothers started taking the moose off the wagon so we could see it better.

My dad and my mom skinned the moose and my mom showed us how to make dry meat. We'd watch her and follow what she did. After the meat had been dried, my mom would cook meat in the fire for us to eat before bedtime. The next morning we had to pack to go home. I was excited that I was on a moose hunt for the first time.

Theresa Cardinal, Grade 8
Kateri School

Peace on Earth

Peace on Earth, we want more
We don't want this stupid war.
We don't want conflict
We want a friend
So please try peace
And put war to end.
One and two were bad enough,
So number three would
Be really rough.
So try peace instead of war,
I'm quite sure you'll like it more.

Cheryl Courtoreille, Grade 8
Elizabeth School

From a Teenager's Point of View

Okay, I may not be a teenager, but all my friends are and we have all experienced drugs and alcohol.

Drugs don't get you anywhere. You may get high, but you could still have fun without drugs. I have fun all the time without drugs. I took drugs before because I thought it would be fun, but I thought to myself, "What am I doing to my body?" Well, anyway, drugs are not fun, cool or anything. It's just garbage.

Alcohol is not good either. Well, I'm not the type of person who likes to drink, but I did drink before and that night wasn't fun at all. You feel dizzy and sick, you have bad breath and most of the people get into fights and that is not a good scene.

The point is: alcohol is not fun. I'm 12 and I have a lot of fun without drugs or alcohol. I hang out with friends and I do a lot of things that are fun. We laugh even though we are not high. We always joke around.

I dance most of the time with my friends.

Being a 12-year-old kid is the same as being a teenager, but the only thing wrong is the time you have to be home. You can't do what you want, but I still think I'm a teenager, even though I am not.

In Fort Chipewyan it's a lot of fun being 12, in the summer or winter. In the summer you can go swimming, running and traveling. In the winter you can go Ski-dooing around town and on the Athabasca Lake. In the winter you could go sliding and you could travel on the winter road.

Anyway, life is fun being a 12-year-old, especially in Fort Chipewyan.

Leah Laviolette, Grade 7
Athabasca Delta Community School

Untitled

Long ago, when we were in Loon Lake, we used to use horses and a wagon from here to Loon Lake. We would spend three days to get there. We used to sleep in our wagon on the road. There was a store between here and Loon Lake. Steve Anderson was the owner of the store. When we got to Loon Lake my dad went hunting and he killed six moose, but the wolves ate them up by the time he went and got the meat, because some guy died and he had to stay for the funeral. That was on a weekend.

Janet Yellowknee, Grade 7
Kateri School

My Grandmother's Past

Her name is Jullian, but I prefer to call her Grandma. But, in Cree that is Kokom. She is about 90 years old and she used to know many people when she was young. And she even told me that she used to know Buffalo Bill, the real Buffalo Bill. She even tells me how hard life was, how hard it was just to keep her children alive, how she used to get two pails of water and hunt like a man. She even told me about some kind of monster that looked like a werewolf but didn't have that much hair. And how she killed it with a little axe. She even told me she used to go out with a white man before she got married to my Grandfather and settled down.

Alvin Houle, Grade 9
Clarence Jaycox School

What You Need to Succeed in Today's Culture

First off, I think you need a lot of self confidence and will power. Well, enough to keep pushing yourself to get something done. For sure you have to have a pretty high average in high school. I'm getting ahead of myself, so I'll start over again. You need self confidence, will power, a high average in high school and a university or college degree.

In high school it is important you work hard and not drop out. It's not a very good life in the future for you if you do. Depending on the university/college and the courses you want to take, if you get a better average in marks, say eighty, ninety percent, you could get into a pretty good university/college. And, of course, there are always matriculation courses.

If you do get into university/college and finish, you may not get a job at first. If you get turned down, try again! If you are offered a job, and you take it while still looking for a better paying job, it's not illegal! Actually you have a better chance of supporting yourself for the time being.

Support from your friends and family in life is very helpful. You can also turn to your religion for support, too. Support gives you self esteem, so if you're more confident, people are more likely to hire you. (It's not bad in making new friends, either!) Also, your friends could probably lend a helping hand, too. You can also look up to former teachers and peers when you need help.

You can also plan to have a child. That is just a thought, because maybe you are just too busy. Well, you'd be busier, and I guess you should wait until you are older. (Another of my opinions!) That is all I have to say on the subject.

Dayle McDonald, Grade 7
Fort MacKay School

Teachers

Teachers, you learn from them.
You can't learn without them.
You learn to love them, and they leave.
That's what I hate, getting used to teachers
and just when you start caring — they leave.

They move for dumb reasons.
You don't hear from them, then suddenly get a letter.
Or you hear from someone else that they said hello
or they want to see you.

I'd really hate to see any more teachers leave
but I wish I had the old ones back.
I really miss them.

Now I'm moving so I won't see any more teachers leave.
I hope I never have to get used to any more teachers
then watch them leave forever and ever.

John Yellowknee, Grade 8
Mistassiniy School

Untitled

She lived in a settlement
and earned her keep.
She was making up stories
of her life and personality.
Her window opened wide
and smelling the fresh air,
she thought back...

She thought back to the life
she used to live back then,
thinking, "Do I miss the life back then?
Just partying and fighting?"
She thought back to that life.

She thinks, "Is this the life I want?
Staying home, keeping house and babysitting?"
She wonders, "Should I go back
to the life that I had once lived,
or should I stay with this life?"

She thinks "Should I stay in this life I live,
no partying and no fighting?"
She misses all her friends that she had made,
but then that was her life.
Now is the time she chose to live.

Now staying home is part of her life,
learning how to cook and clean house.
As if getting ready for living on her own,
to try and survive
even though she has somebody to help her.

Charlene Gladue, Grade 8
Gift Lake School

Friends

Friends are people you could talk to
When you're feeling sad and blue.

They bring you out from your saddest days.
They will help you in so many ways.

A friend is a friend forever.
They will never leave you, not ever.

I have two best friends you see,
And I am so glad they are with me.

Their names are Laverne and Trish,
And now I want to make a wish.

This wish is not make believe,
That these friends will never leave.

Crystal Lee Collins, Grade 8
Elizabeth School

Friends

Friends are forever,

We have sleepovers
And they steal my covers.
We gossip about boys,
And we make lots of noise.
Sometimes we walk around,
Or we sing a song.
We are always together,
Like one tall feather.

Friends are forever.

Crystal Wilson, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

War

Dreams are put on hold,
Never knowing — they'll be told.
Sitting in a room thinking of my dreams,
While all the outside world screams.
Nothing to do but be in gloom,
All I do is sit in my room.

People here, people there,
All I hear is shooting everywhere.

That day is near,
That day is here.
When I look outside,
My town is clear.

The war is over
And I cheer.

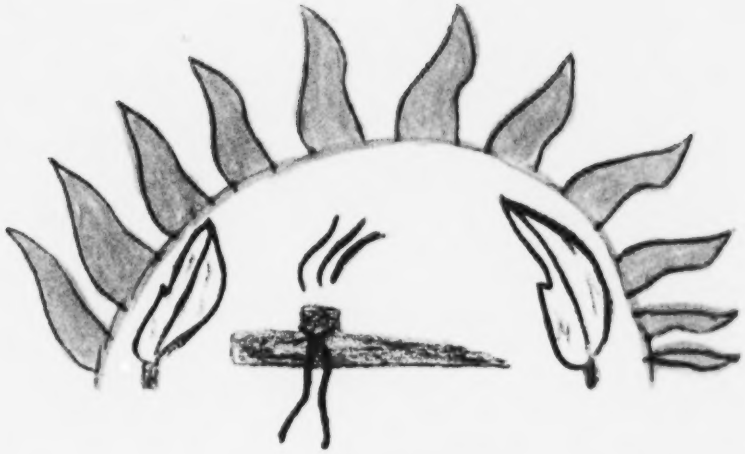
Crystal McDonald, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

My Alibi

"Yes, Mrs. Smith, I know I'm late for class. The reason? Well, you see . . . there . . . uh . . . was this baboon and she had this baby in her arms . . . yeah! And . . . and the baby was crying . . . no, Mrs. Smith, the baby was human . . . and a woman was screaming, 'Save my baby!' and waving her arms and kicking and taking a fit. So I did. Did what? Save her baby? Of course. How? Well . . . uh . . . I chased her and . . . no! The baboon, Mrs. Smith! Anyway, the baboon climbed a tree and I climbed after her and took away the baby, then dropped her onto the rescue trampoline and she bounced off the rescue trampoline into her mother's arms! Yes, I know this isn't creative writing class! Well, anyway that's why I'm late for class."

"Where's my essay? Well, the baboon looked so hungry that I fed her my homework. She just LOOKED hungry! Is it true? Would you doubt my alibi?"

Dayle McDonald, Grade 7
Fort MacKay School



Racism

I was born in this place,
My heritage is Cree.
Judged by the colour of my face,
But not by the actions of me.

Some are fair,
Some are cruel.
Some don't care,
They think they rule.

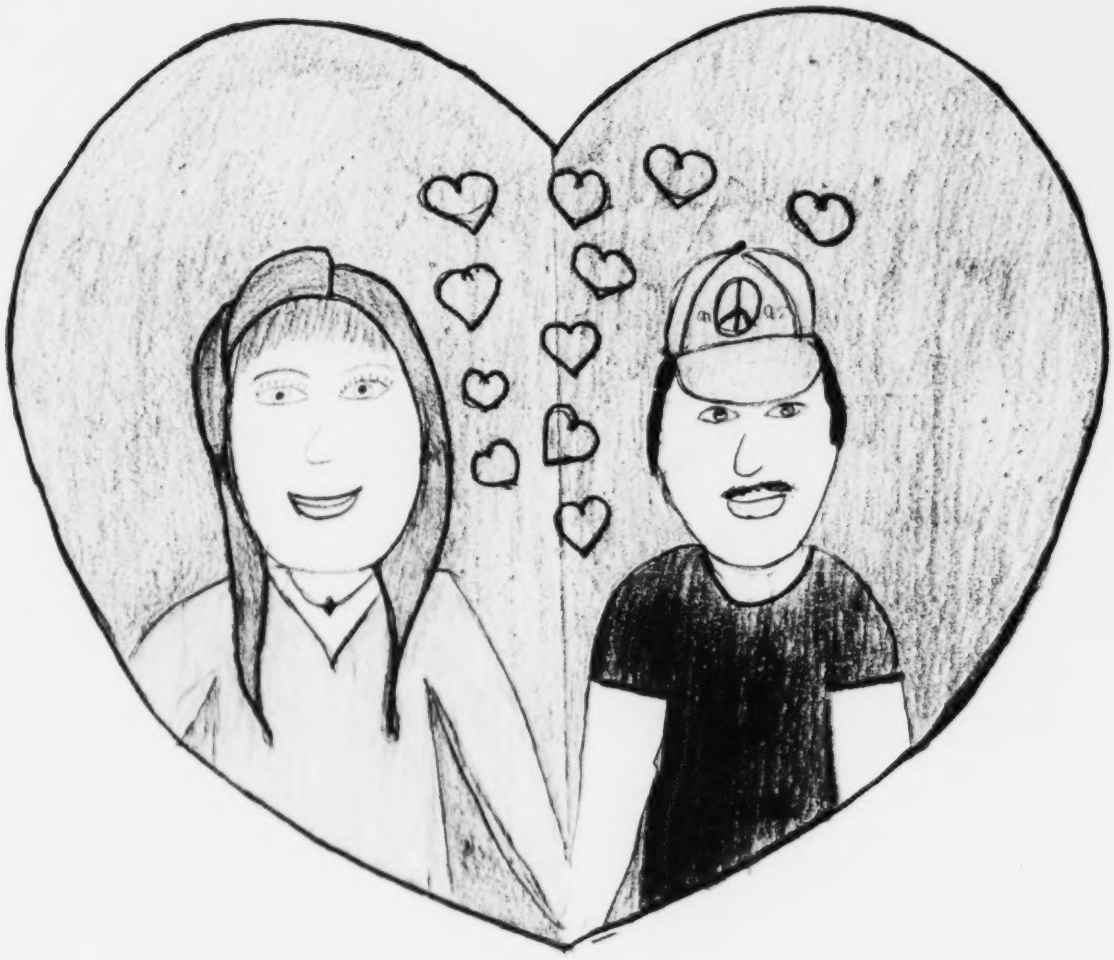
We'll never fit in their crowd,
That's what they say.
We'll never be allowed,
We're treated like lumps of clay.

Some really care,
They help us a lot.
What they share,
Is what they were taught.

Some love us, some hate us,
They don't treat us like their own kind.
This racism is getting worse,
It could split my mind.

I hope one day,
They would see the light.
Then this dark, cold world
Would turn out right.

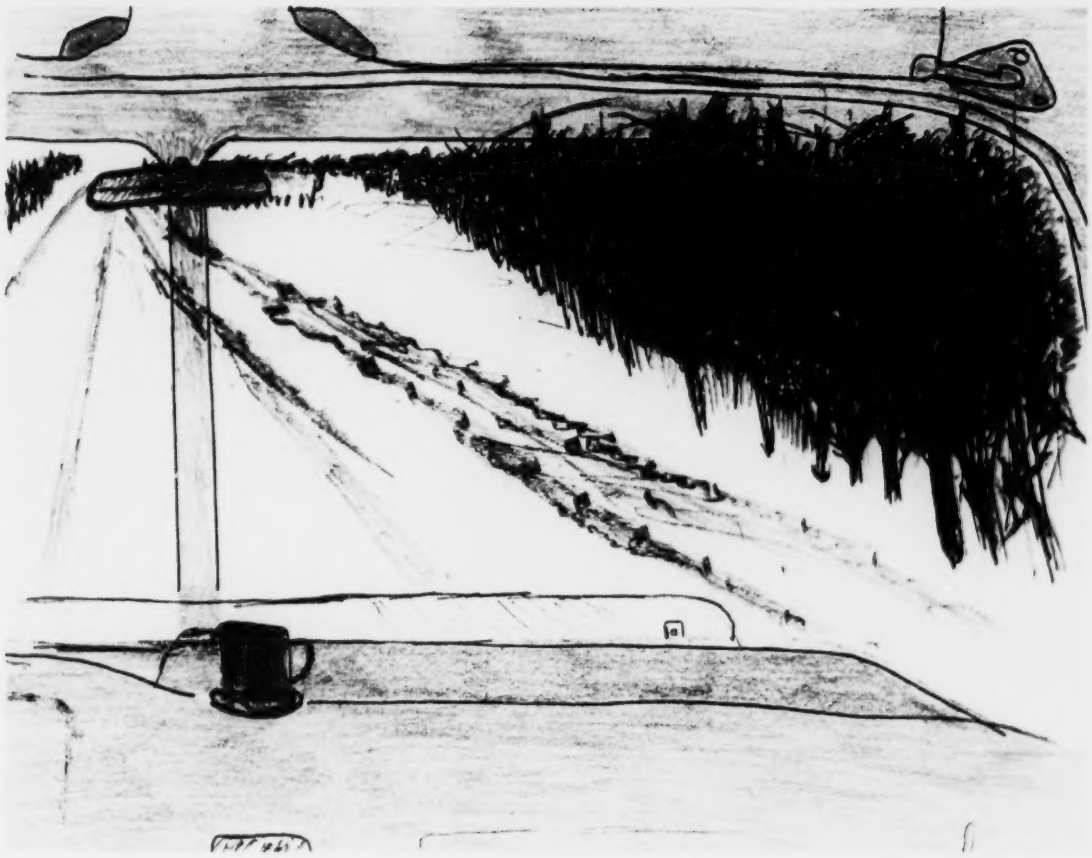
Loretta Boucher, Grade 9
Fort MacKay School



Love is Blind

Love is blind, it cannot see.
I love a man,
Who doesn't love me.
Love is blind, so am I,
And now I sit here
And start to cry,
'Cause my love for him
Will never die.

Trish Whiteknife, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School



The Winter Road

The winter road is from Fort Chipewyan to Fort McMurray. You leave towards Doghead, which is one of two parts of town. The first part of the road you pass a creek, then you keep going for two minutes and you cross a river, then there are two options, either to go to Fort Smith or Fort McMurray; in our case, Fort McMurray. It takes about four and a half hours maximum to go.

When you are on the road you may see other vehicles. You might pass them or they might pass you. Sometimes you can't pass. The road is all full of snow and there's hardly any visibility. On weekends the road is quite busy.

The road opened on November 29 at 2:30 p.m. This year we are lucky we had cold weather early to freeze the lakes and creeks. The road is rough. I think that's what I've been hearing from other

people around town. You are lucky if you have a 4 × 4 truck or a good driver to drive a small car because mostly there are small cars in town, but if you go drive around in Fort McMurray you see all kinds of vehicles.

Just before you reach Fort McMurray there is a small town by the name of Fort MacKay. There is pavement just before you get there and until you get to Fort McMurray. After you pass Fort MacKay there is Syncrude and Suncor. You are lucky if you don't smell tar while passing these. When you are almost there you see the bright lights, but you have to pass the last obstacle.

The big bridge goes over the Athabasca River. After you go over the bridge you are home free and you can go and relax.

Ryan Martin, Grade 8
Athabasca Delta Community School

Friends

Friends are special.
They will make
you feel happy
about yourself.
Friends will never
try to turn
you down.
Friends are always
around to help
you with your
problems.
Friends can keep
secrets that you
tell them.

Kevin Thunder, Grade 7
Little Buffalo School

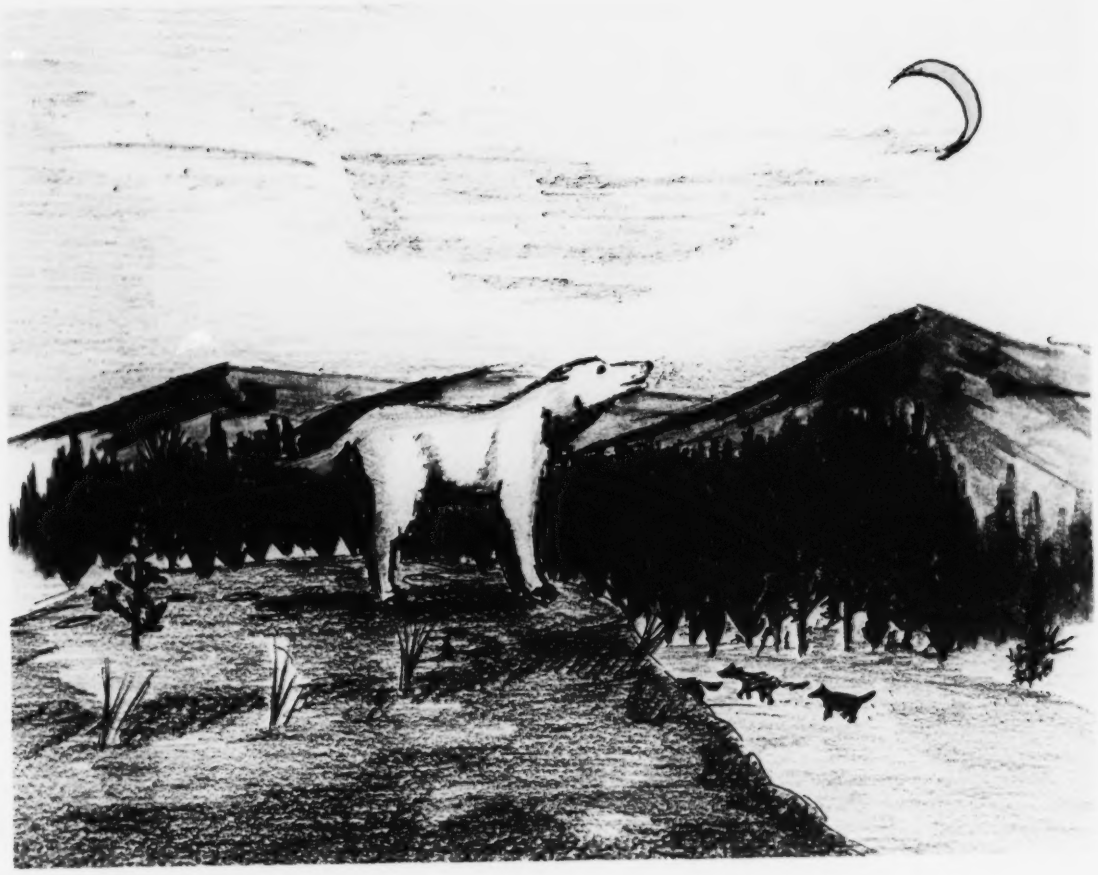
A Friend is Someone You Turn To

There she is all alone, with nowhere to go, nowhere to hide.

Her dad's at the bar, and her mom's not home. To whom can she talk, to whom can she go?

There's one person left to give her a hand, and that's her dear friend, who will always be there!

Anonymous
Elizabeth School



Winter

A branch breaks

The snow falls,

Falls, falls, falls,

Falls and falls

And the ground

Is covered.

Isaac Laboucan-Avirom, Grade 8
Cadotte Lake School

Halloween Night in Wabasca

I stayed home until eight o'clock giving out candy. I was pretty bored because hardly anyone dressed up. I didn't give them any candy unless they had a costume on.

Then Brian came to pick me up with his van. Along with Brian and me, there were Dwayne, Dendrick and Eric. They told me to get some eggs. They already had a dozen each.

We drove all over Wabasca when we saw Dale, Dean, Dallas and Mike walking on the road. We slowed down, opened the side door to the van and threw eggs at them. One of the guys hit Dale on the butt. I opened the panel doors at the back and threw mine from there.

We were cruising when we passed Armand's truck. They threw eggs at us so we turned the van around and chased them. We drove right beside them and when they opened their door to throw more eggs we nailed them good. After we passed them I told Brian to slow down. I opened the back door and threw eggs at their windshield. By then I'd used up seven eggs.

Brian stepped on the gas going around a curve, and we nearly tipped. Because he wasn't looking where we were going, we hit the ditch, just missing a fire hydrant and got stuck. We all helped push the van out, but then Dwayne, Eric and I walked home. We didn't want to ride with Brian any more.

Albert Badger
Mistassiniy School

Love

Love is red,
Love is blue.
Look out lovers,
Love can hurt you.

Love is lonely,
Love is pain.
But, with a special person
You can't complain.

Love can hurt you,
When you fall.
And, when he leaves you,
It hurts most of all.

So, keep your heart strong,
For the road ahead.
If it wasn't for love,
You'd soon be dead.

Andrea Lynn Mercredi, Grade 8
Little Buffalo School

The Christmas Gift

One morning I awoke to the smell of bacon browning on our old cook stove. Mother called to me and said, "Get up dear, it's Christmas morning!" It seemed forever as I hurried down our twisted stairway.

Finally, I got down. I really didn't expect anything for Christmas, but there under the tree was a big box with my name on it. I ran over to the tree and said, "Hmmmm. I wonder what is in that big box?" There in the box was a coat of many colours, 'specially made by my mother. I tried it on and it fit perfectly. I thought it was the most beautiful coat I had ever seen! I ran over to my mother and thanked her. Then, I ran upstairs to get my mother's present. I looked under my bed where I last put it. It was gone! Just then I remembered that Spot, my dog, had a ribbon in his mouth like the one on my mother's present. So, I ran into the hallway where Spot's dog house was placed. When I looked in the dog house, there was my mother's present, wrapped as nice as it could be. I grabbed the present, ran downstairs and gave the present to my mother with a sweet kiss.

To this day I still don't know how my present remained wrapped when Spot had the ribbon.

Crystal Lee Collins, Grade 8
Elizabeth School

How to Drive Your Parents Crazy

Dear Children:

I want you to know I am an expert on this. So, want to drive your parents crazy? Well, try one of these suggestions.

First of all, if you want to go anywhere with your parents, and they ask you if there is anyone behind the vehicle, say, "No," then out of the blue say "Mom, you just ran over someone!" That's bound to get them steamed up.

Well, if that doesn't work, you could always jump in the shower before them and use up all the hot water. When your parent is in the shower run hot water in the sink, so they won't have much hot water to shower with. If that doesn't work, try this when your parents or parent is sleeping. Go jump on the bed and/or tell them the kitchen is on fire. When you're in a crowded place pretend you are handicapped or create a scene.

If you have a guest and your mom or dad comes out of the bathroom, say "You got Kleenex hanging from your pants", or "Your fly is open." Well, that's about it.

Sincerely yours,

Melinda Stewart, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

What Being Native is All About

Being native, for me, is something special. In my community it is an important way of our lives. Some people are forgetting their way of life, but then there are others who feel strongly about their culture. I am a pow-wow dancer and I like dancing because we go to different places to perform and people enjoy watching us.

Being a native is sometimes hard because some people don't like our way of life, or what we believe in. When you look at all the natives in the world, there are many different cultures, because they have their own way of doing things. People think that all natives are the same, but they are not.

In today's society it is hard to live. Natives today get into a lot of different things. A lot of natives are successful: some have become lawyers, doctors, teachers or maybe today some own their own businesses. Unfortunately, some are not successful and they start having a lot of problems and having a low standard of life.

In a native culture the language is the most important issue, but today the language is disappearing fast. When natives lose their language it can't be regained because it takes a lot of time.

Being native has good points about it, and people should try to keep whatever culture they belong to.

Elaine Faichney, Grade 9
Fort MacKay School

Who Cares About Life?

If you're having problems . . . who cares?
If you're feeling down . . . who cares?
If you're being abused . . . who cares?
If things don't go your way . . . who cares?

Well, to tell you the truth . . . I CARE!

Life is dumb, you say,
Life is hard, so you have to pay.
Life is drugs, you get high.
Life is booze, you drink your rye.

Life is tough, can't take it anymore.
You pull the trigger — you settle the score.

But wait . . . talk to me . . . don't give up on life.
Give it a chance because
Life can be paradise.

Dwayne Cardinal, Grade 8
Mistassiniy School

Love Is For Many

At anytime there is love in the air,
For families or relations to show they care.
Love is what makes our world go round,
To raise a family until you're buried in the ground.
Love is no object, it's a feeling inside,
That can be expressed and taken for a ride.
Love is all the same, even for your pet,
Or new relationships of girls or boys you met.
Love can be as gentle as a flowing brook,
That can be stored in an album or even a book.
Whatever it is you love may it be your wish,
A pot of gold, a girl or boy, or, heck, even a fish.
Love is sometimes as little as a penny.
But remember, love is for many.

Romeo Quinn, Grade 8
Elizabeth School

The Big Summer Vacation

When I was about eight years old, during the summer holidays, we went to Bernard's cabin past Buffalo Lake. We went on two wagons and got there in two and a half days. I was riding a horse and a vehicle was coming. The horse wouldn't get off the road, so Bernard came and helped me steer the horse off the road.

Later that day we stopped to camp at Devil's Creek. The next stop was in Buffalo Lake where we camped overnight. The following day we headed for Bernard's cabin. When we got there my grandparents set up the camp and Bernard and his wife set up the cabin. We kids helped but then were told to do something like go snaring.

Erwin and I found some rabbit trails and snared for a few days, but never caught any. We also picked berries and went for walks with Bernard. While on one walk, when we were heading back to the cabin, Bernard said, "You and Erwin race to the cabin the long way and I'll take the short way." Unfortunately for Erwin his boot fell off, so I got there first, but Bernard was even faster. When I walked in the cabin he was asleep on the bed.

Another thing I remember is that it snowed one day even though it was in the middle of the summer. Bella, Jennifer, Melissa, Carl, Erwin and I had fun in the snow, but there wasn't enough to make a snowman.

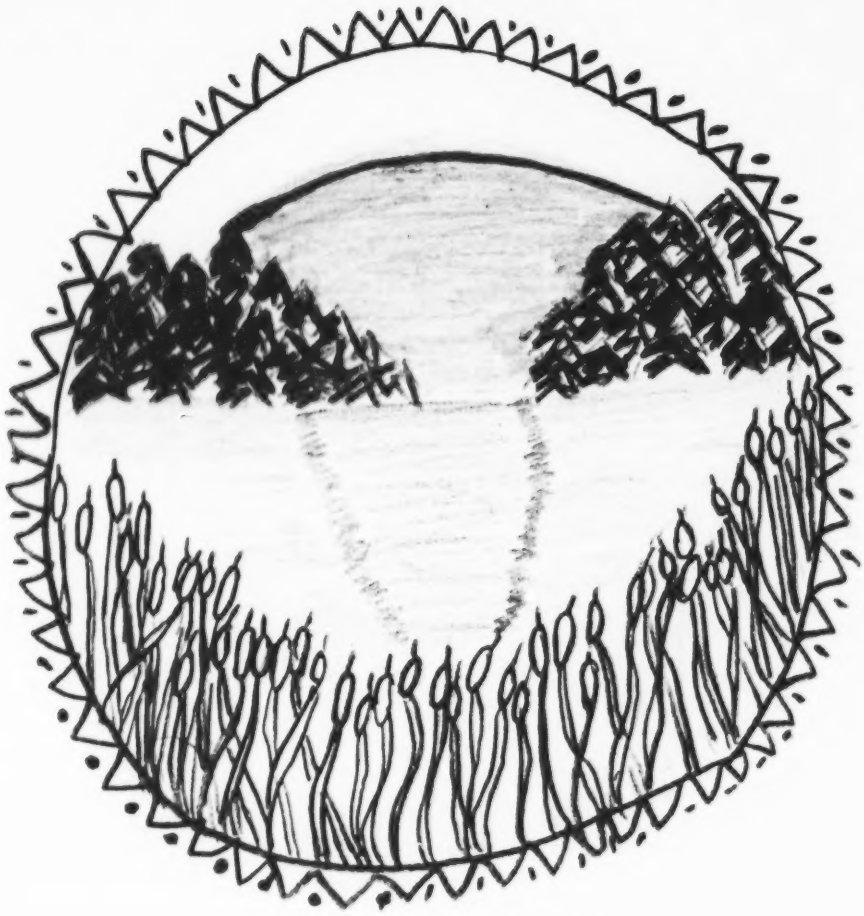
I also learned how to play Crazy 8's. Bella and Jennifer showed me how. Bella beat me the first few times, but finally I beat her. I was happy and wanted to play some more.

About the fourth day at the cabin Bernard, Carl, Erwin and I went hunting on foot. On the walk we tracked a grizzly bear — the track was about three inches longer than Bernard's foot. After all the camping and hunting we killed about three moose, a lot of chickens and a few beaver. The whole time Bella and I slept in our grandparents' tent and Carl slept with Bernard and his family in the cabin.

We were travelling home when we met my dad a little past Fish Lake. It was raining and the roads were rough. My dad looked happy to see us and we were glad to see him because we were cold and wet. We dried off in the truck and drank some pop my dad had brought. On our way home we even saw a tipped grader.

When we got home my mom told us about Dennis' and Vera's wedding, because we had missed it. We were kind of upset because Carla told us about all the food that was there.

Jason Laboucan, Grade 8
Little Buffalo School



Love and Friendship

You and friendship go hand in hand,
A friendship, it should be so grand.
You can argue, quarrel and squabble too,
But in the end your friendship will renew,
Friends will help through thick and thin,
Even if you never win.
A friend will help throughout your days,
Even in your wildest phase.
I hope my friends will never be gone,
For friendship is a gentle fawn.

Lisa Swan, Grade 8
Elizabeth School

I Had a Friend

I had a friend who was someone to me.
I met her at our school.
A.D.C.S. that is.
She came for a floor hockey tournament.

Her name was Elaine,
She was very nice you see.
We talked on the phone and wrote
Many letters and all of a sudden, we stopped.

I saw her at the Blueberry Festival,
She only said "hi".
After that we never said a word.
Then I had a friend.

Crystal McConnell, Grade 8
Athabasca Delta Community School

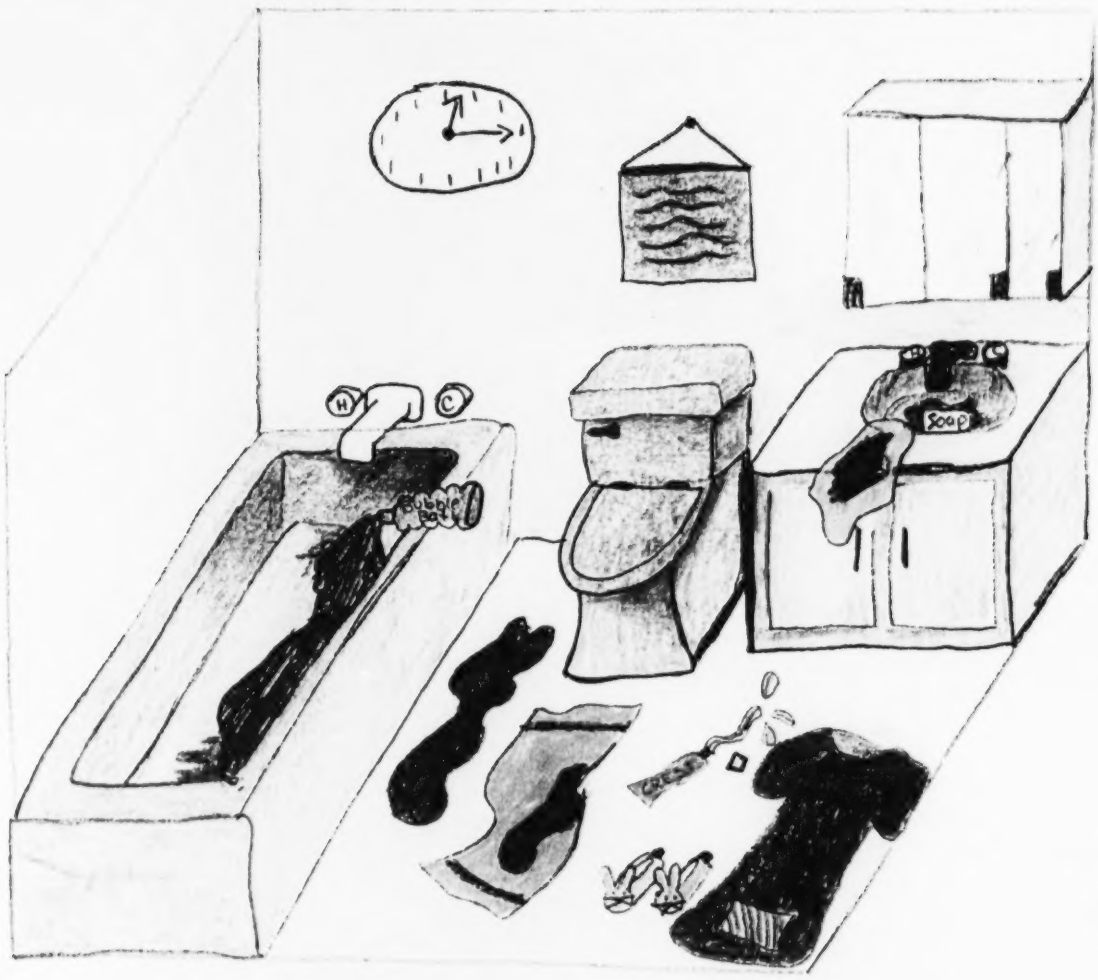
Teenage Years

This story is all about being a teenager. All teenagers have problems in their lifetime when they are growing up, like doing school work and getting friends. Well, that is what I'm going to talk about in this story — how my teenage years are in Loon Lake, Alberta.

My teenage years were hard for me. I didn't do very well in school and I didn't have a lot of friends in or outside of school. It was very lonely for me. But, one day my mom talked to me about school. She helped me when it got hard in school. My dad told me how to get to know people. He told me to talk to people and to be nice to them.

So all you teenagers out there, I want to tell you it will be hard in school and with friends. Don't let that stop you. You can do it and finish school. And be nice to people for they will be nice to you. Teenagers find good friends that are nice to you and help you out. SAY NO TO DRUGS! Go out there and be a winner. GO NOW, and don't stop.

Floyd Letendre, Grade 9
Clarence Jaycox School



What Kids Can Do To Bug Parents

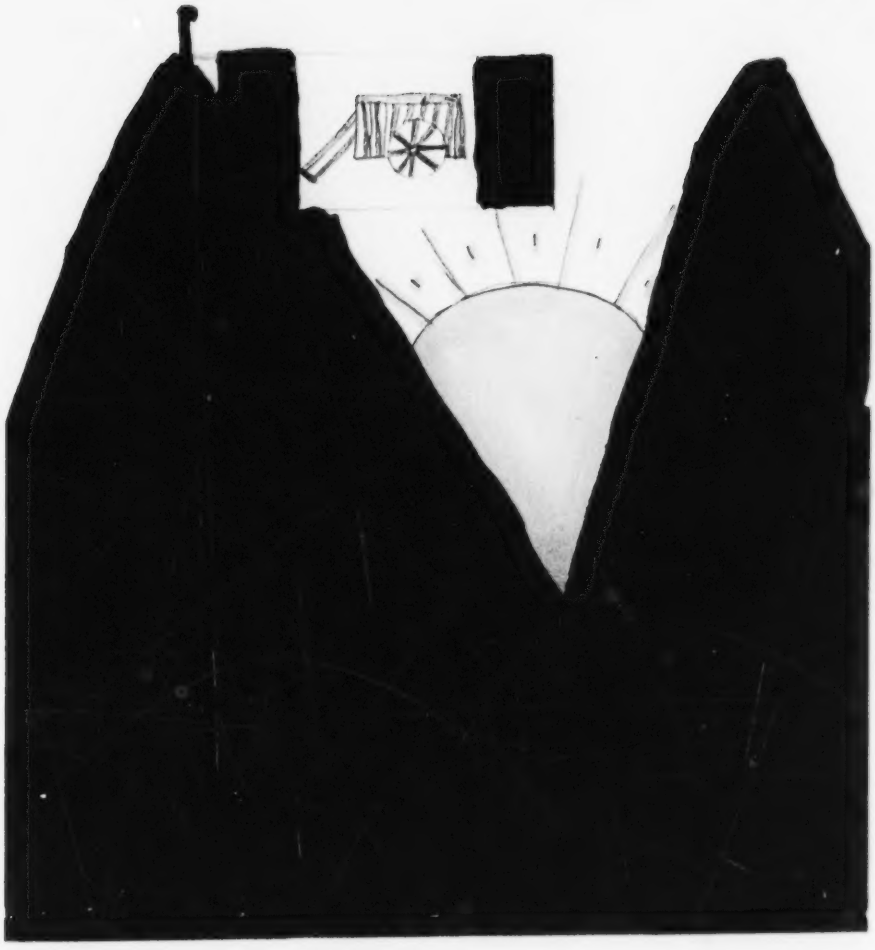
Have you ever wanted to get your parents mad at you for no reason at all? It's fun (well, sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't). There are many ways to do it: there is the "messy bedroom for a week or month", then there is the "before school bathroom mess". I did the "messy bedroom" one, it works!

Every night I would throw my dirty clothes on the floor and bring dishes down with food or something on them, then leave them under my bed or my dressers or just on the floor. When I did that my mom would be short of dishes. In the morning while I looked for something to wear I threw the other clothes on my bed or dresser and didn't fold them and throw them back in my dresser. The clothes

would be sticking out all over, but who cares? When my mom or dad came down to see my bedroom, I noticed they stayed by the door the whole time as if they couldn't walk or something. My dad started to yell and my mom started to scream, "Clean up your gross, filthy room!" or "This is worse than a pigsty!" or even "We gave you a room for privacy, but with all these bugs and whatever else in there, they must keep you company." I shook my head and started cleaning up, but as soon as they left I put everything back the way it was.

I don't know what happens when the "messy bathroom" is done, but what you do is you wake up in the morning a little late so you have to rush to get to school. Get dressed in the bathroom and leave your P.J.s on the floor, then wash your face. When you're done, drain the sink and put hot steamy water in the sink and put the soap in. The soap will melt and stick to the bottom of the sink and some will float to the top of the water. Then you throw the towel on the floor and go brush your teeth, leave the toothpaste cap off and put it on the floor, then step on the tube. Hopefully it will look like a tornado hit, but just to make sure, check and if you have any bubble bath or shampoo sitting by the tub or on the tub's edge, loosen the cap and accidently bump it over. Take another wash cloth and smear it in the soap so it looks like you are wiping it up. What should you do before your parents see it, you say? That is why you woke up late! Now go eat, then run to school. When you get home if your mom or dad asks you about the bathroom tell them, "But I was late for school." Then go watch television. I try to be good for my parents most of the time, but after a while it gets boring. I use the "messy bedroom" a lot but you can use the "messy bathroom" if you want. They are both guaranteed to get your parents very mad.

Kyla Mosure, Grade 8
Dr. Mary Jackson School



Stand Tall and Be Proud

Stand tall and be proud of our great Metis leaders, who stood up and spoke great words of truth, strength and freedom. We as Metis should have loyalty, courage, determination and deepest respect so that we may follow the path of our great leaders. Our land and culture may have been lost without their wise words.

Stand tall and be proud!
Our Metis leaders have spoken loudly.
Stand tall and be Metis!

Lyle Desjarlais, Grade 7
Elizabeth School

The Prayer of the Tree

Lord,
My leaves are falling
and my branches are breaking.
I am tired and weak.
Lord,
I hope someone
will use me for something useful.
And Lord,
thank you
for all the time you help me.
Amen.

Kevin Letendre, Grade 8
Clarence Jaycox School

20-month-old child dead blamed on

impaired driving

Parents heaRT broken

no more smiles

NO Little voice

he's in Heaven

Kyla Mosure, Grade 8
Dr. Mary Jackson School

Being Native

I am a native and am proud to be one. Some people say that natives are criminals, druggies, alcoholics. That is true with some people but others, who want to get things accomplished are proud to be Indian. Me for one, I only want to get things in life accomplished. White people try to criticize Indians by calling them down, but we know who has the most intention. Some Indians have a bad life on Skid Row, that's why we get called down. Those prejudiced people have to understand that white people live on the streets also.

Being native is special because we were the first Canadians. When the French and the English people settled in Canada they could barely handle the cold weather. All their men caught the flu and a bad cold and many died. The whites went to the Indians for help and the Indians helped them by giving the French and English ratroot and other medicines.

The natives have a strong religion. They have ceremonies in which they ask the spirits to help them through the good and the bad. Their ceremonies include sweats at which they sit in a lodge and sweat in the dark and welcome and thank the spirits. We use the sweetgrass to purify ourselves and the sage to do the same. On special occasions we have pow-wows and at our pow-wows we usually have a round dance in which we welcome anyone to dance. We have grass dancers, hoop dancers, traditional dancers, jingle dress dancers. There is a wide variety of dancers. That's why being native is special.

Trisha A. Boucher, Grade 8
Fort MacKay School

Are You Really My Friend?

Are you really my
friend?
It seems as though you
don't care,
You let out my most
secret thoughts,
You let people know about
my problems,
I thought I could trust
you,
How could you do this
to me?
Are you really my
friend?

Mavis Cardinal, Grade 8
Mistassiniy School

Fort Chipewyan

Forest
O
Rough
T

C
Hamlet
Isolated
P
E
Winter road
Y
Athabasca
Northern Alberta

Garren Whiteknife, Grade 7
Athabasca Delta Community School

Teenage Years

Today life is not the same as it was when I was young. Today young people don't seem to even know any prayers and they don't pay any attention to their religion.

I was born in Grande Cache in 1929, and in 1938 my father passed away. It was very hard for my mother and myself, without my father to provide for us. However, other people gave us things that we could use. We did have a lot of horses and cows. Other people were very kind a long time ago, and today it is very different. Back then people didn't have to pay for anything. They didn't have to pay for their traplines; they could trap anywhere they wanted. People made a living off of moosehides and fur.

Three years after my father died my mother married my step-father, David Joachim. He provided for us. He was a very good hunter and trapper.

One whole moosehide back then was worth about $10.00, a pair of plain mocassins was $1.25 and the ones that were beaded were $2.00 a pair. Back then things weren't expensive and there wasn't any welfare and people weren't given any money to buy food. People survived by their trapping and hunting.

When my father died and I was nine years old, I was taught to hunt and trap. But I was taught to trap more and it was very hard for me. I had to use snowshoes and I would have to go into the mountains to do my trapping, and the snow was very deep. A lot of times I would leave in the morning when it was dark and I would get home after dark. One time my stepfather asked me to go check his traps for him. I had a really hard time because he had caught three cougars and I had to chop their heads off because the pelt wasn't worth anything. Anyway, the heads were frozen and they were heavy. I carried them all the way home so I didn't get home until after dark. That was very hard though because the snow was so deep and the heads were so heavy.

Today you don't even see any young men doing this. Instead they wait for trucks and Ski-doos to take them around. They can't even seem to find any work. Today it is the women trying to work. I can't help but think that when I was young I could kill my own moose, deer, elk, etc. Also when I was young I was always told to sew and bead, that is why I still like doing that today.

I used to think that my mother raised me hard, but now I realize she raised me right. Today mothers don't scold their children and they don't teach them respect. Children today talk back to their parents; they own themselves; they don't know respect and they try to act like grown-ups even though they are still children. When a

parent tries to talk to his or her children today the children won't listen because they don't like what they are hearing and yet when they need something they go running to their parents or their grandparents.

Well that is all. I don't have anything else to tell.

Emily Moberly, Elder
Nose Creek School

Terry Durnnian

Terry was born in New Brunswick but after roving from the United States to Alberta, Nova Scotia and Quebec, he found himself teaching at Clarence Jaycox School in Loon Lake, Alberta at the ripe old age of 25. Terry has a sense of adventure laced with a sarcastic sense of humour.

New School

When I was thirteen, my dad accepted a new job. At first I thought the idea of moving was okay, for we had moved a couple times before. But this time, Dad was going to move the whole family all the way across Canada from Nova Scotia to Alberta. Alberta was just a place on a map, like Ireland or Russia to me, then. Three thousand miles away from my friends and grandparents, we travelled by car.

After we had settled in Valleyview, Alberta, Mum thought it was time for my brothers and I to be registered in school here. I did not want to go, for I had no friends there, but Mum said I had no choice. I remember walking into Mr. Press's room on the first day with the words "New Kid" invisibly printed on my forehead. I quietly took my designated seat as the whispers of the other students echoed around me. They all seemed to know I was from the east, and did not like easterners even though I was not from Ontario or Quebec. Around me the other kids pointed at me and laughed. They seemed to blame me for the problems between Alberta and the federal government concerning the oil. No one really talked to me but the teachers. I wished I was home in Nova Scotia with my friends.

The next day I was not really excited about returning to this school, but again Mum said "You are going to school. It will be better today." I really did not think, at the time, she knew what she was talking about, but I went back. And she was right, for during lunch one of the other students came over and said hi to me. We started to talk, and he introduced me to other students in the class. That day was better, and it got better day after day as I started making friends. Though I still missed my old friends, I did not miss them as much. I even started to like this new home three thousand miles away from my friends and grandparents.

Terry Durnnian
Loon Lake, Alberta

Jerel Gibbs

Jerel was born in Camrose and lives in Wabasca, Alberta with his wife Donna, his daughter Heather, and his son Skyler. He has taught Language Arts at Mistassiniy School since 1973. His hobbies include reading, writing, listening to music and annoying his wife. Jerel's main ambition is to one day tell a joke that's funny.

Music and Memories

The kids were gathered around in the hall listening to the ghetto blaster, watching a couple of grade eight students rap dancing. It was lunch hour at Mistassiniy. Noisy, exuberant, the kids rocked to rhythms that drove me batty. The music was loud, insistent, repetitive and crass. But the fun these students were having suggested something very different was happening to them than to me.

I ordered them outside, where I couldn't hear the music. I felt distracted, annoyed and alienated. I couldn't see what it was that attracted the kids to those sounds. As part of the Rock Generation I wondered how could it be that Rock Music had deviated so much from what we heard?

On the way home from school that evening I played a '60s tape on the car cassette. Here were the familiar sounds of MY youth. Ah, yes "Wild Thing" by the Troggs. What a song:

"Wild thing, you make my heart sing
You make everything . . . groovy"

Played to a simplistic bass and drumbeat, this song couldn't be forgotten even if we tried. Back in 1966 we hollered this song in the school yard, blasted it from our record players and drove our parents to distraction.

"Wild Thing" aside, I always remembered the profound lyrics of our songs. The next song on the tape was from that one-hit band, the Castaways, singing "Liar, Liar."

"Liar, Liar pants on fire
Your nose is longer than a telephone wire. . ."

Well, some songs had profound lyrics.

When I got home I thought I'd listen again and hear what the songs of my teenage years were really like. Due to the huge success of re-releasing "Classic Rock", I had managed to buy most of the hits I used to listen to on high quality cassette or compact disc.

I slapped some songs at random on the stereo. They sounded all wrong. I realized that I was hearing tonal "qualities" no transistor radio or one tinny speaker record player ever reproduced. I immediately toned down the bass, the mid-range and basically ran the

music through the tweeters on my speakers. Now it sounded right, awful but right.

When I was fourteen a scratchy record or a song on a $5.00 radio sounded just fine. I would listen to 630 CHED every night waiting for the songs I liked best. My allowance was spent on 45s at $1.00 each and I'd play them over and over; driving my parents crazy in the process.

As I listened to the songs on the compact disc player, I re-adjusted the sound. My ears needed the sound qualities our new technology provided. Then I began to listen with my imagination. Each song evoked an instant in time, the friends I was with, the places I heard the song, the time of year and more marvellously how I felt when I heard the song for the first time. It didn't matter whether the songs were good or bad, they brought back memories: of dancing classes in the gym with a girl a foot and half taller than me; sailing out at Comox as a Sea Cadet on a sunny summer afternoon; in the Zeller's store buying the records; being with my friends at house parties, and school dances. I remembered my awkwardness, my lapses of social graces, even my infatuations through music that wove through the tapestry of my life more clearly than at any time since. I remembered being fourteen again through these songs and when they were over I felt the loss of the innocence and excitement.

The next day the students were rocking the halls and dancing spontaneously again. The music blared so loud the speakers distorted the sound. It was tinny and fuzzy and hard to distinguish anything. The kids were bopping their heads, gyrating oddly with their bodies. I saw them creating moments for themselves, to remember when they heard the first notes of familiar songs as they grew older. I headed back to the office without comment this time. I didn't want to interfere.

Jerel Gibbs
Mistassiniy, Alberta

Patti Publicover

Patti was born in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and after much globe-trotting now lives in Little Buffalo, Alberta. She has enjoyed writing since an early age and has worked on various school, college and university publications. With ten years of teaching experience, Patti feels a sense of humour is essential in the Junior High classroom.

The Levi Tag

One of the most vivid memories from my teenage years began at the skating rink in Chester, Nova Scotia in the winter of '75. It was the Friday night before March Break, so everyone was hyped to have a good time and see our school hockey team win.

Since my boyfriend at that time played on the team, I usually sat right behind the players' bench, eager to cheer the guys on. This night was no different except that sitting beside me was Randy Armstrong, one of the grade twelve guys from the team, and probably the best all round athlete in our school. This in itself was rather unusual because he was generally one of the team's key players. Also, he was sitting in the section where all the screaming, rowdy girlfriends liked to congregate.

Although it's been seventeen years since that night, it stands out clearly in my mind — the vaporous breaths in the cold rink air, the dim lighting, the thwack of bodies and pucks hitting the boards and the good natured ribbing from the guy on my right. Randy was someone I'd known since I joined the track team in grade eight. Over the years we'd shared track meets, hockey games and a few parties. He often teased me about my boyfriend and enjoyed treating me like a kid because I was four years younger than he was. This night was no exception so we spent most of the game joking around the way most teens do.

It was the fad that year for the girls at school to collect Levi tags off the back pockets of blue jeans. Of course we acquired these by ripping them off the backsides of fellow classmates. The reason I mention this is that at some point in the evening I ended up with Randy's Levi tag in *my* hand. Rather embarrassed by my boldness, I quickly shoved the torn orange tag in my front pocket and forgot about it.

The rest of that night was uneventful — I can't even recall now who won the hockey game or how I got home to Blandford. In looking back those details really aren't important anyway. What is important is how I felt the next day when I learned that Randy had been killed that morning.

He was driving his dad's big gravel truck when he stopped to give a friend a boost. Neither guy realized that the trucks were parked on an icy surface. When Randy was working in between the trucks, one slid toward the other and he was crushed between them.

As my friend Glenda told me the details, my mind just seemed to shut down. "This isn't real," I thought as I left Glenda's house. "Last night was real, but this isn't."

I remember crying, almost unconsciously, as I walked home. I remember reaching into my pocket for a kleenex so my folks wouldn't see how upset I was. And I remember how it hit me when the dull orange Levi tag fell into my palm . . . last night was a memory and this was real.

A decade and a half later, I still have that Levi tag at home in a dresser drawer, tucked in among other teenage treasures. And, even though I still shed tears over Randy's senseless death, I also have wonderful memories of him.

Patti Publicover
Little Buffalo, Alberta

Kin Mason

Kin Mason was born in Sheldon, Texas. He spent two years at sea, three years in the army and attended universities in Canada and the United States. He has his M.Ed from the University of Victoria. Kin was a pedagogical supervisor for the school division.

Teachers were Teenagers Too

Teens sometimes make mistakes and get laughed at. That hurts. But most of us learn from our mistakes.

I'll tell you about my first job and a time when everyone laughed at me because of my ignorance. There were other times as well, but I'll share this one with you.

I came from a tiny place that had only a store and a post office. Nearby was a Texas State Park that had a famous eating place. People came from all over to eat the seafood, fried chicken and biscuits that were served there. There were no menus; the same eight-course dinner was served to everyone. Framed letters from movie stars and President Roosevelt were displayed among the enormous paintings of cowboys that graced the walls.

I would work there as a busboy later on; but my first job, at age thirteen was in a small cafe next door which was for visitors in a hurry or on a low budget. Hamburgers in those days were ten cents; potato chips and pop were five cents. Shrimp burgers and crab burgers were fifteen cents each. I worked one day each week — on Sunday — helping the old German, Otto, and his son-in-law, Frank. Frank drove a school bus during the week and worked in the cafe on Sundays. He was funny. He always had something humorous to say, and everyone liked him.

Sunday was a busy day and cars came from all over North America, mostly from the States but also a handful from Canada and Mexico. There was a hand-operated gas pump which was my responsibility, and also if people preferred to eat in their cars, instead of inside the hot and crowded cafe, I would bring food out to them.

Otto would give me two dollars in the morning. Anything I took outside, I would pay for, and then I would collect from the customers. The two dollars was my pay for the day, and I kept whatever tips came my way. On a good day I might make fifty-five to sixty-five cents in tips. That doesn't sound like much today, but don't forget, it could buy four hamburgers, four pops and a pack of Juicy Fruit gum to share with your girl.

One Sunday a man and his family drove up and ordered their lunch. The man was insistent that his hamburger be rare. He repeated this two or three times. I must have looked pretty dumb because he finally asked me, "Don't you know what rare means?"

"Sure," I answered. I thought it was a stupid question. Everyone knew that "rare" meant there wasn't very much of something. Like a tiger in Texas would be a rare animal.

"Look," he commanded, "I want to hear you tell the chef to make my hamburger rare. Say it out loud, where I can hear you all the way outside. No mistakes now!"

Now that was really embarrassing. Not only that, he called Otto "chef," when he probably meant "chief." Anyway, I went back inside. The cafe was a buzzing of voices blended with the sizzling of Otto's grill. I gave the order for the hamburgers and started putting the pop and chips on a tray.

"Tell me again," said Otto. "I didn't understand."

Just then the noise level dropped somewhat as I said in a loud voice, "There's a crazy man out there who says tell the chief he don't want too much meat in his hamburger."

"Vel, tell him not to vorry," said Otto, laughing.

"Yeah," chimed in Frank, "tell him we'll put a toothpick through the bun, so he can find where the meat is."

That got a few laughs, but when I looked around I discovered that the "crazy man" had followed me into the cafe and had heard me. He told Otto how he had to have his meat really rare. Otto and Frank broke into wild laughter. I'm sure that for the next few days, they could have used my face for a stop light, it was so red. Even the teachers at school asked me how I liked my hamburgers (thanks to Frank, whose big mouth spread the story).

For a while, I thought I'd blow up everyone who had laughed at me, and maybe run away from home. But I didn't. I got over it and learned from my mistakes.

A wise man said, "The person who doesn't make mistakes is a person who never does anything." Lots of truth there.

So you should know now that just like you, we teachers also made our share of mistakes. But we eventually learned from our mistakes, and so will you!

Kin Mason
Fort McMurray, Alberta

Douglas Ross

Douglas Ross was born in Calgary and raised in Drumheller. He is married to the beautiful Rose Ross and lives in Fort Chipewyan where he teaches Junior High. He has a strong interest in weight training. Doug shares this, as well as a special approach to writing, with the students in his classes.

Hit Me With Your Best Shot

This event took place one late November night as I was driving home from my girlfriend's farm. While I was descending the road leading into the Drumheller Valley, I began to feel the car start to slide out of control. My speed was such that I could either continue down the hill and hope to regain control or slam on the brakes and hope for the best.

A sharp corner one hundred metres ahead convinced me that I should hit the brakes. At that moment everything began to move in slow motion. The car went into a slow spin and crossed from the right side of the road to the left. The front and rear passenger side wheels gripped the ditch as the car travelled backwards. The car began to turn over and as it did I hung onto the steering wheel with all my strength.

I ended up lying inside the car on the roof. My first thought was that the car would blow up, so I quickly crawled out of the smashed front window, remembering at the last minute to turn off the ignition. I made my way clear of the wreckage and hitched a ride back into town.

I can still remember the song that was playing on the radio before I pulled the keys from the ignition. It was Pat Benatar's "Hit Me With Your Best Shot."

Douglas Ross
Fort Chipewyan, Alberta

Neil Kowal

Neil was born in Saskatchewan and attended school in Canora and Saskatoon. He is married and lives with his wife Helen and two sons Jamie and John. Neil teaches at Elizabeth Settlement and spends his free time farming, fishing, curling and golfing. He is also a Justice of the Peace.

Hornet Haven

It was a hot, dry Saskatchewan day. Sloughs were drying up and gophers were abundant. I was visiting my cousin at the farm during our summer holiday. Zane and I were eleven and had similar interests.

Zane had fed the chickens, gathered the eggs and checked the kitchen water supply. I had fed the pigs, drawn the water for the horses and picked the vegetables for borscht. Now we were free, chores finished!

Zane and I headed to the back of the house to the old abandoned granary. Armed with slingshots and pockets bulging with smooth, hand-picked marble-sized rocks we were ready for anything.

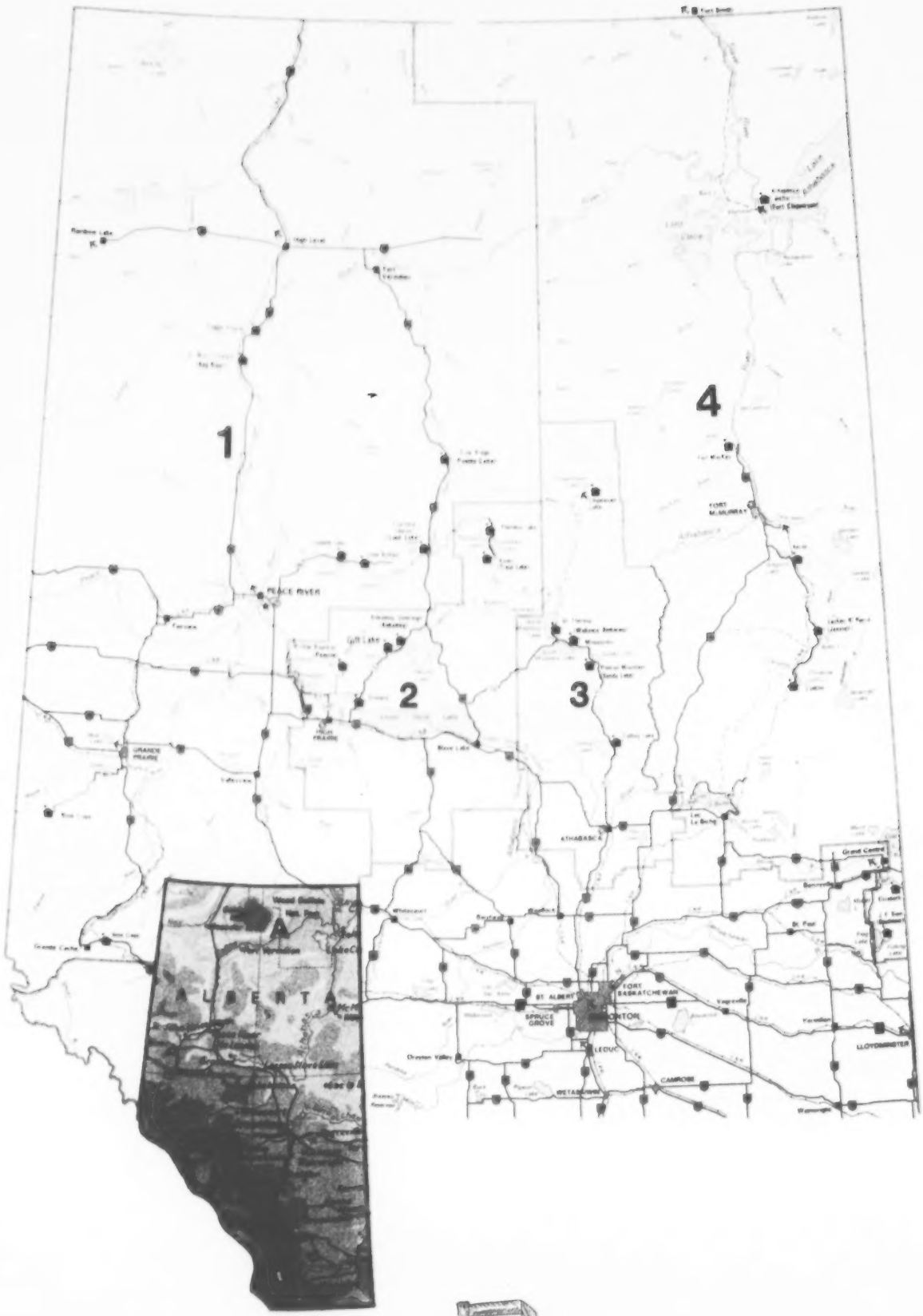
Zane spotted a hornets' nest and suggested we use it for target practice. We loaded our slings and began firing. Our target appeared safe until we both shouted, "I hit it!"

We hit it and the hornets hit us! The one hundred metre record was set that hot July day in Saskatchewan.

Upon arrival into the confines and safety of the house we were met by my grandmother who instantly knew what had happened. She rubbed us completely with large slices of raw onion. We gave on this day a new meaning to aroma and pain.

In retrospect Zane and I have ever since given a wide berth to hornets.

Neil Kowal
Elizabeth Settlement



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The administration, on behalf of the board of trustees of Northland School Division No. 61 extends its appreciation to those individuals who assisted in the development and production of the *Student Expressions Anthology* and *Teacher's Resource Guide*. A special thank you for their inspiration and support is extended to:

Elders — Fred Belcourt, Emily Moberly, Evelyn Thunder

Education Committee — Adele Carifelle, Donna Halabisky, Elizabeth Jacknife, Cecelia Sterling

External Sources — Bil Chinn (Alberta Teachers' Association English Language Arts Council); Jennifer Crane, Barbara Esdale (Alberta Education, Curriculum Branch); Merv Kowalchuk, Bernie McKee (Alberta Education, Native Education Project); Dr. Jean Young (University of Alberta)

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